

June 29, 2001

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR SIKH
HOMELAND DISCUSSED ON CAP-
ITOL HILL

HON. CYNTHIA A. MCKINNEY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, June 15, the Think Tank for National Self-Determination held a very informative meeting here on Capitol Hill in the Rayburn House Office Building. The featured speaker was Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. He laid out very well the strong case for self-determination for the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan, and for the other nations of South Asia, such as predominantly Christian Nagaland and predominantly Muslim Kashmir.

During his speech, Dr. Aulakh noted that "self-determination is the birthright of all peoples and nations." He quoted Thomas Jefferson, who wrote in our own Declaration of Independence that when a government tramples on the basic rights of the people, "it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it." Jefferson also wrote, "Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God."

India certainly is that kind of government. It has killed over 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947, more than 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, over 75,000 Kashmiri Muslims since 1988, and many thousands of other minorities, including people from Assam, Manipur, Tamil Nadu, and members of the Dalit caste, the dark-skinned "Untouchables," who are the aboriginal people of South Asia, among others. Currently, there are 17 freedom movements in India.

Just recently, a group of Indian soldiers was caught trying to set fire to a Gurdwara, a Sikh temple, in Kashmir, and some houses. Local townspeople, both Sikh and Muslim, overwhelmed the soldiers and prevented them from committing this atrocity. Unfortunately, that is the reality of "the world's largest democracy."

Mr. Speaker, there are measures that America can take to prevent further atrocities and help the people of the subcontinent live in freedom. We should end our aid to the Indian government until it stops repressing the people and we should openly and publicly declare our support for self-determination for the people of Khalistan, Nagaland, Kashmir, and the other nations seeking their freedom in South Asia. This is the best way to help them. It supports the principles that gave birth to our country and it strengthens our security position in that region.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert Dr. Aulakh's speech into the RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

REMARKS OF DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN

It is a pleasure to be back here with my friends at the Think Tank for National Self-Determination. This is a very important organization and I am proud to support its work.

Self-determination is the birthright of all peoples and nations. Next month America will celebrate its independence. Thomas Jefferson, author of the American Declaration of Independence, wrote that when a govern-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ment tramples on the people's rights, "it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it." He also wrote that "resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." Sikhs share that view. We are instructed by the Gurus to be vigilant against tyranny wherever it rears its ugly head. Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the Sikh Gurus, proclaimed the Sikh Nation sovereign. Every day we pray "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa," which means "the Khalsa shall rule."

Let me tell you a little about the history of Sikh national sovereignty. Sikhs established Khalsa Raj in 1710, lasting until 1716. In 1765, Sikh rule in Punjab was re-established, and it lasted until the British conquered the subcontinent in 1849. Under Maharajah Ranjit Singh, Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims all served in the government. All people were treated equally and fairly. The Sikh state was extensive, at one point reaching all the way to Kabul.

At the time that the British quit India, three nations were supposed to get sovereignty. Jinnah got Pakistan for the Muslims on the basis of religion and the Hindus got India. India made a deal with the Hindu maharajah of Kashmir to keep the state within India despite a Muslim majority population, but at the same time it marched troops into Hyderabad to annex it to India by defeating the Muslim ruler, Nizam of Hyderabad. Hyderabad at the time had a majority Hindu population and a Muslim maharajah.

The third nation that was to receive sovereign power was the Sikh Nation. However, Nehru tricked the Sikh leadership of the time into taking their share with India on the promise that Sikhs would enjoy "the glow of freedom" in Punjab and no law affecting the rights of Sikhs would pass without Sikh consent. As soon as the ink dried, however, the Indian government broke those promises. They sent a memo to all officials declaring Sikhs "a criminal race" does that sound like a democracy or a totalitarian state in the Nazi/Communist mold?—and the repression of Sikhs began. No Sikh representative has ever signed the Indian constitution to this day.

In June 1984 the Indian government attacked the holiest of Sikh shrines, the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Ask yourself, what would you think if someone launched a military attack on the Vatican or Mecca? That is how Sikhs felt about the Golden Temple massacre and desecration. Seventeen years later, we have still not forgotten it, as the attendance at our recent protest shows.

Since that attack, the Indian government has murdered more than 250,000 Sikhs, according to figures published in *The Politics of Genocide* by human-rights leader Inderjit Singh Jaijee, convener of the Movement Against State Repression. A new report from Jaijee's organization shows that India admitted that it held over 52,000 Sikhs as political prisoners without charge or trial under the expired "Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act." Some of the political prisoners have been in illegal custody since 1984! In 1994, the U.S. State Department reported that the Indian government paid over 41,000 cash bounties to police officers for killing Sikhs. One such bonus was paid to a policeman who murdered a three-year-old Sikh boy. Others have been paid for killing Sikhs who later showed up alive, rising the question: Who did the police really murder?

Unfortunately, there is often no way to answer that question. Human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa exposed the fact that the Indian government picked up over 50,000

Sikhs, tortured them, killed them, then declared their bodies "unidentified" and cremated them. Just recently, more bodies were found in a river bank. For this, Mr. Khalsa was arrested and killed in police custody. The only eyewitness to the Khalsa kidnapping was arrested for trying to hand the British Home Secretary a petition asking Britain to get involved in helping to secure human rights for the Sikhs.

Two independent investigations showed that the Indian government killed 35 Sikhs last year in the village of Chithi Singhpora in Kashmir. Just last week, five Indian troops were overwhelmed by Sikh and Muslim residents of another village while they were trying to burn down the local Gurdwara and some Sikh homes. This is part of India's ongoing effort to set the minorities against each other. With 17 freedom movements within India's borders, the idea that the minorities might support each other scares the Indian government.

It is not just Sikhs who are being oppressed. While my main focus is on my own people, I am committed to freedom and human rights for all peoples and nations. There has been a wave of oppression of Christians since Christmas 1998. Members of the RSS, the pro-Fascist parent organization of the ruling BJP, murdered missionary Graham Staines and his two sons, ages 8 to 10, by burning them to death while they slept in their jeep. Nuns have been raped, priests have been killed, schools and prayer halls have been attacked. Last year, the RSS published a booklet on how to implicate Christians and other minorities in false criminal cases.

The BJP destroyed the Babri mosque in Ayodhya and still intends to build a Hindu temple on the site. Leaders of the BJP have said that everyone who lives in India must be Hindu or must be subservient to Hinduism. They have called for the "Indianization" of non-Hindu religions.

Is that a democratic country? U.S. Congressman Edolphus Towns pointed out that "the mere fact that [Sikhs] have the right to choose their oppressors does not mean they live in a democracy." Congressman Dana Rohrabacher said that for the minorities "India might as well be Nazi Germany."

Sikh martyr Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale said that "If the Indian government attacks the Golden Temple, it will lay the foundation of Khalistan." He was right. On October 7, 1987, the Sikh Nation declared the independence of its homeland, Punjab, Khalistan. India claims that there is no support for Khalistan. It also claims to be democratic despite the atrocities. Then why not simply put the issue of independence to a vote, the democratic way? What are they afraid of?

Self-determination is the right of all people and nations. America should sanction India and stop its aid until all the people of South Asia are allowed to live in freedom.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity. I hope you will support freedom for Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and all the nations of South Asia.

TRADE RELATIONS REGARDING
PRODUCTS OF KAZAKHSTAN

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to place in the Congressional Record the following letter I received from A. Machkevitch

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